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SOURCE As indicated

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL DATA ON RUMANIA
FROM EMIGRE SOURCES

FATE OF SMALL LANDOWNERS -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Jan 54

Some kulaks and owners of small farms in Rumania, unable to pay the heavy taxes, are trying by every means to get rid of their land. The best way would seem to be to offer it to the state, but the gift is only accepted if the owner pays the 8-percent gift tax. Few owners can afford to do this and they can find no way out of their dilemma.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN BUCHAREST -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Mar 54

According to travelers returning from Bucharest, the only private enterprises still in existence are shoe-repair stores, taxis, photographic studios, and retail fruit and vegetable stores.

WOMEN IN THE ELECTIONS OF 20 DECEMBER 1953 -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Jan 54

Very few women were slated to run for office in the recent Rumanian elections for people's councils, but they were assigned the major part of the campaigning. Women's committees of people's councils, assemblies of delegates, etc., had leading parts, and the great majority of agitators were women. They were much more active than the men, especially when it came to urging workers to exceed the norms in honor of the elections and to doing unpaid political work. Agitation points were mainly furnished, decorated, and staffed by women, and women did most of the house-to-house canvassing.

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The explanation seems to be that the Communist regime despaired of overcoming the inertia it knew it would encounter on the part of the thoroughly disillusioned male population and had to fall back on the women to form the vanguard in this strange electoral battle, in which there were no opponents.

PARTY CONFERENCES -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Mar 54

In Rumania, the party leaders are now stressing a certain amount of decentralization, not of power, of course, because power remains entirely in the hands of the Politburo, but of economic responsibilities, under the slogan "Do not expect everything from the center."

The new policy is to be applied by the regiune and raion party conferences, which, in turn, elect the committees which are their executive organs. Just now, new committee elections are being held, presumably to synchronize the election of the people's councils, which took place in December, with that of the party organs, with the aim of implementing the new economic program of August 1953. It appears that the party committees were paying insufficient attention to the prescribed increase in agricultural production and maximum utilization of local resources, and also that they were being frequently taken in by more or less reactionary elements who are better informed on economic matters.

The new Malenkov course is visibly handicapped, not only by the incompetence of most party members, but also by the practical difficulty of subordinating the committees to the party conferences in an organization as tightly controlled as the Communist Party. For, while the conferences elect the committees, it is the committees which designate the delegates who are to be members of the conferences. Not only do they designate the members, but they "enlighten" them on their duties. The Communist newspapers themselves have pointed out that the delegates are so well indoctrinated that they become the tools of those they are supposed to supervise.

One may well wonder whether, in many respects, the Malenkov system of collective leadership is not less efficient than the Stalin system.

SUBSCRIPTION TO COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Mar 54

The system of withholding the subscription price of *Scanteia* and other publications from wages has been reintroduced. This system, which had been in force at the beginning of the Communist regime, was dropped some time ago and a party official was stationed at the pay offices to collect the subscriptions from the workers. But the number of workers who refused to pay increased steadily, and it was finally decided to revert to the former practice of withholding subscription payments.

ART WORKS DISAPPEAR IN BUCHAREST -- Paris, BIRE, 15 Jan 54

Some months ago, plans were made public for an exhibition of paintings, engravings, etc., of historic interest, such as portraits of Rumanian princes, statesmen, and pictures of historic events. The exhibition was to be held in the former Royal Palace. Owners of the art works were requested to loan them for the exhibition, and some 10,000 items were thus collected. But they were never returned to their owners. Some 7,000 were destroyed on "political" and "artistic" grounds, while 3,000 were retained by the state without payment. Needless to say, the exhibition was never held.

FORCED EVACUATION OF BUILDINGS -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Jan 54

Several weeks ago, the 480 tenants of a group of large apartment houses on Strada Wilson in Bucharest were evicted by the authorities. They were forced to leave within 48 hours and were assigned living quarters in suburban tenements.

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HOUSING FOR WORKERS -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Jan 54

The housing services of the people's councils in cities levy a fine of 5 percent for every day's delay in paying the rent.

WORKERS WAGES IN RUMANIA -- Paris, La Nation Roumaine, 1 Jan 54

A Western delegate to the Youth Festival who, unknown to the interpreter, spoke Rumanian, asked a factory worker what his monthly wages were during a conducted tour. Three hundred lei was the reply, which the interpreter translated as 600. Before leaving, the delegate thanked the workers and the horrified interpreter in fluent Rumanian.

This story furnishes the key to official accounts of labor conditions in Rumania. One of the drawbacks of nationalization of industry has been that many expenses which were previously borne by the capitalists are now chargeable to the workers, who own the factories; these include various types of repairs or deficits at cafeterias. Formerly, meals eaten there were not under rationing, but now ration cards must be shown.

The Rumanian worker's average monthly wage is 400 lei, but he only receives the full amount if he has fulfilled his norm, and then only after trade union dues, subscriptions to Scanteia and other papers, aid to Korean children, etc., have been withheld. Other workers are paid on a piecework basis, but for the worker there are drawbacks to either system.

Some of the workers employed on a monthly basis earn more than the average if they exceed the norm and become leading workers or even Stakhanovites, but they usually end up in tuberculosis hospitals. The norms are raised almost every month, but the pay remains the same. Norms are established by highly paid norm planners, who are recruited among workers well thought of by the party and who have taken a special course. They base the norms on the production rate achieved by leading workers.

Pieceworkers can be divided into two categories according to the degree of favor they enjoy. Those in high favor get the best machines and materials and can, of course, earn more, while the others earn even less than their comrades who have failed to fulfill the norm. A worker in a shoe factory, for example, can hardly earn much if he is assigned to an old machine that constantly breaks down and is given poor-quality leather that tears frequently.

When women do piecework, immorality is frequently fostered. To be assigned to properly functioning machines, the younger women must satisfy the desires of the bosses (responsabili), who are numerous. First come the party bosses, then the trade union bosses, the norm planners, the foreman, the cadre, etc. They are all former workers who were smarter than the others, have "graduated from production," and now form a class of well-paid parasites.

The worst are the foremen, who must terrorize the workers, discover saboteurs, etc., to keep their jobs. Almost as bad are the members of the cadre committee, who form a sort of special police. They keep the worker's individual record, a copy of which goes to the Orgbureau of the Central Committee, where the records of every worker in the country are kept.

All these parasites are a heavy financial burden, which reflects itself in production costs. Their number is steadily increasing, and it is quite likely that these ostensible defenders of Communist society will turn out to have been its gravediggers.

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PANIC ON THE BUCHAREST BLACK MARKET -- BIRE, 15 Feb 54

The new parity established for the leu by a decree issued on 1 February 1954, which fixes 1.50 lei as the equivalent of one rubel and 6 lei as the equivalent of one US dollar, started a panic on the black market, as it was considered a forerunner of another monetary reform, similar to that of 1947 and that of 1952. The exchange rate rose to 30 lei for a dollar, and to 250 paper lei for a 20-lei gold piece.

A NEW CITY -- Innsbruck, Stindardul, Nov-Dec 53

Romania Libera of 25 November 1953 contains an interesting and revealing account of a visit by a member of its staff to the new city of Sacele. Stalin Regiune, formed through the incorporation of the communes of Baciu, Turches, Cernatu, and Satulung, and the hamlet of Garcin.

In one respect, the account is misleading. The author tries to give the impression that the paved sidewalks and the main street are an achievement of the present regime, whereas they were actually laid in 1940. However, this is the only lie and in the rest of the article, the author reveals much that is true. He states, for instance, that there are six state and 16 cooperative stores. That makes 22 stores for 26,000 people, one sixth the former number. He further describes how two happy mothers leave a store with parcels. Unable to resist the importunities of their offspring to try on their new overcoats immediately, they open the parcels on the sidewalk, and to everybody's joy, they find that the overcoats actually fit the children. In other words, the consumer is forced to purchase his clothes without being able to make sure beforehand that they are his size.

The author also informs us that the new city boasts of a restaurant. One restaurant for 26,000 inhabitants!

WHY THE DANUBE-BLACK SEA CANAL WAS ABANDONED -- Paris BIRE, 15 Jan 54

Swiss experts consulted on the Danube-Black Sea Canal project are said to have concluded that if the blueprints were carried out, the canal would lie several meters below the level of the Black Sea and the entire region would be exposed to certain inundation. They found further that only 3 kilometers out of the 70 planned had actually been finished.

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